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Detroit Free Press

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Suspect in NYC attack plotted for weeks

29-year-old from Uzbekistan now facing federal terrorism charges. **2A, 13A**

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Suit: Student's mouth taped

Pattern of abuse is alleged for special-needs student

Paul Egan Detroit Free Press | USA TODAY NETWORK

A teacher at an Ann Arbor school taped shut the mouth of a student with cerebral palsy as part of a pattern of abuse, according to a lawsuit filed in federal court Wednesday against the teacher, her supervisor and the Washtenaw Intermediate School District

Nesa Johnson, a teacher at High Point School, "literally taped … shut" the student's mouth in March 2016 to keep her quiet because she was "making noises" consistent with her disability, according to the seven-figure lawsuit filed in Detroit by the student's mother, Doreen Smith.

Johnson then photographed the student and texted the photo to the student's mother, with a caption reading: "Help. She won't be quiet!!!!," according to the lawsuit and attached exhibits.

"Taping a special needs student's mouth shut … was especially torturous for (someone) who … has trouble breathing."

A lawsuit filed in federal court

The student is 26 but unable to speak and appears much younger at just under 5 feet tall and 62 pounds, according to the lawsuit. In addition to cerebral palsy, the student has cognitive disorders, a history of seizures and an inability to speak or move her hands and arms, which leaves her "totally dependent on others for her care including such basic needs as feeding and toileting," the lawsuit states.

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IT'S BEGINNING TO LOOK …

The Christmas tree is here. Detroit's 61-foot-tall Michigan-grown Norwegian spruce tree arrived in downtown Wednesday morning and was put into place in Campus Martius. Thanksgiving hasn't even arrived, but the city will be full of bright lights and in the holiday spirit by the end of the week after the tree is fully decorated. The annual Detroit tree lighting ceremony will take place from 5 p.m. to midnight Nov. 17 in Campus Martius.

KIMBERLY P. MITCHELL/DETROIT FREE PRESS

Wet winter on the way: Lots of rain or snow?

Warm Great Lakes means more Michigan precipitation

Keith Matheny Detroit Free Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

Michigan's start to winter should be wet, scientists say. But it's still unclear whether you will need a snow shovel or umbrella.

Great Lakes surface-water temperatures are significantly warmer than usual for this time of year, the result of a late August and September that felt more like July. That means there will be more water vapor above the lakes.

That's often a formula for heavy lake-effect snow, scientists say. But it all depends on the temperature of the air flows over the lakes.

"You get a greater temperature difference between the lake water and the air above it, in general, you would expect heavier lake-effect precipitation," said Jonathan Erdman, senior meteorologist with The Weather Channel and weather.com. "The trick is, is the air above the lakes cold enough to support snow?"

Very often in Michigan, winter air patterns send very cold air from the Canadian Arctic southeast over the Great Lakes. And warm surface waters, with frigid air passing over them, generally act like a snow-making machines, particularly in the northern Upper Peninsula, the northwestern Lower Peninsula and along Lake Michigan's eastern shoreline.

Last year, lake-effect snow was "relatively a dud" in most of the region's typical snow belts, even though the lakes were warm and there was little ice cover, Erdman said.

That was despite last year's La Niña, a condition of colder temperatures in equatorial regions of the Pacific Ocean that have significant impacts on global weather, and that typically mean colder air over the Great Lakes region.

See WINTER, Page 12A

State flips: Medical pot shops to stay open

Kathleen Gray Detroit Free Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

After receiving hundreds of complaints from medical marijuana card holders that they would be without the product they need for their health for an extended period of time, the state Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs reversed itself Wednesday and decided to let dispensaries stay open during the licensing process.

The department had come up with a ruling in September that dispensaries should close by Dec. 15, which is the day that applications for five categories of licenses become available, or risk losing their chances of getting one of the lucrative licenses.

But medical marijuana cardholders — more than 272,000 in Michigan — worried that the lapse of time between applications

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▫ **Free Press endorsement:** Vote 'no' on both medical marijuana proposals on the ballot Tuesday. **10A**